



Success Story

Southwark Libraries Public WiFi

Overview

Profile

Sector: Town & Community
Website: southwark.gov.uk

About

Southwark Council is made up of 21 wards, each represented by 3 councillors, a total of 63 councillors overall. There are 12 lending libraries in Southwark, including the award winning Peckham and Canada Water libraries

and the stunningly refurbished John Harvard Library.

Mary King Applications Manager:

"We are very pleased with the service so far. My site managers tell me that both the staff and public find it reliable, easy to use and that support, on the few occasions they have had to use it, is responsive."

Another successful installation for WiFi SPARK.

Solution Features

- Full WiFi compliance
- Branded User Experience
- Content filtering
- User and device analytics
- Optional marketing opportunities
- Quality hardware
- Lawful intercept capability
- Free access for visitors

Requirement

Southwark Council has offered free WiFi access in half of their libraries for over six years now, as they wished to relieve the pressure on the fixed public access desktop PC's. Having WiFi has encouraged visitors into the library and has proven to be a way of attracting new library members. The council found that "the current options for this sort of service with the type of management, resiliency and support required are limited". It was therefore essential for WiFi SPARK to provide a cost effective, fully supported and responsive system tailored to the needs of the libraries in Southwark. Mary King, Applications Manager for the library service adds "We need to respond to the way people are choosing to access information and services and many of our customers prefer to do everything online so we need to provide the services and access to allow them to do this." The council realises that many people expect access to internet services on the move, so it is crucial that public spaces such as libraries, can facilitate this.

Solution

WiFi SPARK work with an existing library supplier and was considered when the council made the selection and WiFi SPARK's "costs were

competitive" but there are additional benefits to choosing WiFi SPARK as an internet provider. Flexible public access for groups or sessions which may not be in a position to use fixed public provision e.g. Homework Help Clubs using laptops to support learning, can now connect to the public WiFi at John Harvard (one of the libraries which has WiFi SPARK's wireless solution.) The BYOD revolution (bring your own device) is working in sync with the new WiFi service in an environment, where it is likely that most people visiting public spaces have a smart device, such as an iPad, iPhone, iPod or other smart phone or device.

The benefits of the system are clear and have been popular with visitors as Mary says; "Everyone really likes the fact it remembers you, speed is generally good and the connection is reliable." Another feature of the service is WiFi SPARK's 24/7 UK based Helpdesk and remote monitoring. On the rare occasion that there is an issue with any part of the system, WiFi SPARK's technical support team will often spot and resolve an issue without any intervention by library staff. Mary tells us; "My dealings with Support have been trouble free and it has definitely reduced the amount of time I have had to spend managing the public WiFi service in our libraries."